

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 03414 131134Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00

L-03 FRB-01 OMB-01 ITC-01 SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05

CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07 IO-14 LAB-04 NSAE-00

OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-05 TRSE-00 CEA-01 SS-15 PA-02

PRS-01 H-02 /137 W

-----073902 131413Z /40

R 131020Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8154

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KIGALA

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

UNCLAS COLOMBO 3414

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, CE

SUBJ: FDA BOARD OF TEA EXPERTS

1. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR WRIGGINS, FORMER SRI LANKAN AMBASSADOR TO THE US, OLIVER WEERASINGHE, RECOUNTED HIS SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING WITH THE CONGRESS IN 1970 TO PREVENT THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE BOARD OF TEA EXPERTS OF THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR WEERASINGHE, UNCLASSIFIED

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IT WAS IN SRI LANKA'S INTEREST TO PRESERVE THE BOARD WHICH SETS AND MAINTAINS MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TEA IMPORTED INTO THE U.S. AS A MAJOR EXPORTER OF QUALITY TEAS, IT IS TO SRI LANKA'S ADVANTAGE TO KEEP POOR QUALITY TEAS OUT OF THE US MARKET. MOREOVER, WITHOUT ANY STANDARDS, THE OVERALL QUALITY OF TEA IN THE US COULD DETERIORATE TO THE POINT THAT TOTAL CONSUMPTION WOULD BE AFFECTED.

2. WITHIN HOURS OF TALKING WITH AMBASSADOR WEERASINGHE, AMBASSADOR WRIGGINS SAW AN ARTICLE IN THE AUGUST 26 EDITION OF THE WASHINGTON POST (PAGE B1) REPORTING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER PLANS TO SAVE \$15 MILLION BY ABOLISHING THE BOARD OF TEA EXPERTS. THE ARTICLE GOES ON, HOWEVER, TO POINT OUT THAT THE BOARD WAS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TEA ACT OF 1887 AND WOULD REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO ELIMINATE. IN ADDITION, THE COST OF THE BOARD IS ACTUALLY COVERED BY THE TEA INDUSTRY THROUGH AN INSPECTION FEE ON TEA.

3. CONVERSATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AND TEA TRADE OFFICIALS REVEAL THAT THEY ARE UNAWARE OF THE RENEWED EFFORT TO DO AWAY WITH THE BOARD. EVERYONE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT AS FAR AS SRI LANKA IS CONCERNED, THE BOARD PERFORMS A VERY USEFUL FUNCTION, AND THEY WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE IT GO OUT OF BUSINESS. THE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT SAID HE WOULD ASK THE SRI LANKA EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER. WRIGGINS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, PRESS COMMENTS, TEA, FOOD & DRUG REGULATIONS, CLOSURE OF OFFICES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 13-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EB  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Release Date:** n/a  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FDA BOARD OF TEA EXPERTS  
**TAGS:** ETRD, CE, FDA, (CARTER, JIMMY)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/a84a0548-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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